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BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT GROUP CELEBRATES FIRST ANNIVERSARY

"The Milky Way" Celebrates a Successful First Year



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Milton, FL – The Florida Department of Health in Santa Rosa County WIC Program's breastfeeding support group, The Milky Way, celebrated its first anniversary Thursday, January 3. Eight new mothers, seven babies, three toddlers, and one dad celebrated with healthy snacks and shared stories about their breastfeeding journeys.

Zack Bruley, a math teacher at Navarre High School, attended with his wife Heather and daughter Temperance. Temperance is the couple's first child. "My wife Heather is always excited to go to her breastfeeding group," Zack said. "She tells me that she feels not only comfortable but safe around these women. As a high school teacher, I don't always get the opportunity to join Heather when she visits her group, but I had the opportunity to make the January meeting and it was fantastic! Lis Jordan has also been quite influential in my wife's feeding successes. Her informative lessons and her 'just have faith that things are working' attitude is just what my wife and I needed. I would encourage any new mother, new-again mother, and of course any dad who wants to support their wife or partner to come to this group to get some support in this very demanding job!"

Elisabeth (Lis) Jordan, International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC), is the breastfeeding program coordinator for the health department's WIC program. She started the group in January 2018, and, although no one attended her first meeting, she continued to encourage new mothers to attend and membership increased. Soon, she was hosting an average of six to eight mothers and babies each month.

Meetings are held the first Thursday of every month at 10:00 a.m. at the health department's Milton location at 5527 Stewart Street. The group is hosted by Lis and Dawn Hodges, a breastfeeding peer counselor with the health department, and is peer led. The mothers meet informally; there is no agenda and no minutes. The women meet to support each other, talk about whatever interests them, and enjoy refreshments while admiring babies and watching toddlers play.

Lis said, "I started the Milky Way in an effort to unify breastfeeding mothers and families in our community. When my children were babies, there were days I longed for coffee dates and conversations with other moms, just to feel like there were other women out there who could relate to my experience. My hope is that the Milky Way continues to provide the opportunity for

moms, and dads, to develop friendships during such a vulnerable time as early parenthood. The Milky Way is a safe place for mothers to join together, to share their feelings; the good, the bad, and the ugly. We can all relate to the struggles of early motherhood, and we're here for you."

The Milky Way meets the first Thursday of the month at 10:00 a.m. at the health department's Milton location. All breastfeeding mothers are welcome to attend, even if they do not participate in the WIC program. For more information on breastfeeding, visit the Florida Department of Health in Santa Rosa County web site at: <http://santarosa.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/wellness-programs/wic/breastfeeding-information/index.html>

For information on The Milky Way, contact Lis Jordan at (850) 564-2272.

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